

2nd OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference

From commitment to action



Date: 12-13 June, 2017

Venue: Neuer Saal, Hofburg, Vienna

Concept Note

The Gender Equality Review Conference aims to provide a platform where representatives of OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation, executive structures, civil society organizations and academia can identify progress achieved in the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, good practices, challenges and gaps, emerging issues as well as areas for action in the short and medium term.

Background and aim of the Conference

As the largest regional security organization in the world, the OSCE has an important role to play in addressing the comprehensive aspects of women's and men's, girls' and boys' human rights and security. Though there has been progress globally and in the OSCE region on advancing towards gender equality, this has been slow and uneven. To make progress in achieving gender equality in the OSCE region, it is important to build momentum, strengthen the political commitments and ensure that these are translated into concrete action at national level. The 2004 Ministerial Council Decision for an OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (MC.DEC/14/04) is the key OSCE document on gender equality. Since then, several Ministerial Council decisions on gender issues have been adopted, including on women in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation (MC.DEC/14/05); preventing and combating violence against women (MC.DEC/15/05 and MC.DEC/7/14); women's participation in political and public life (MC.DEC/7/09); and promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere (MC/DEC/10/11). In addition, several key Ministerial Council Decisions include reference to the importance of gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of women in laws and policies.

At the global level, the adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the targeted goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, marked the global commitment to dismantle barriers to women's participation in all spheres of life. In addition, gender issues are mainstreamed across all SDGs, highlighting that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are

essential to achieve progress across all the goals and targets, including SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

Three years after the first Gender Equality Review Conference in 2014, the second Gender Equality Review Conference will take place on 12-13 June 2017, in Vienna, Austria, organized in partnership between the Gender Section, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the Austrian Chair of the OSCE. The Conference will assess progress in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan, taking into account the recommendations and conclusions from the 2014 Conference.

The aim of the 2nd Gender Equality Review Conference is to establish more systematic implementation processes and targeted activities in the priority areas in the three OSCE security dimensions, focusing on gender mainstreaming in the security sector; equal economic opportunities; women's participation in political and public life, and combating gender-based violence. The Gender Equality Review Conference will also provide space to discuss emerging issues that impact the promotion of gender equality in the OSCE region, including how OSCE's work links to the achievement of the SDGs.

Scope of the conference

The conference will consist of plenary sessions in a panel format as well as parallel working sessions focusing on specific thematic areas, all followed by an open discussion. The conference will start with a high-level opening panel, followed by six thematic sessions during which speakers from governments, international organizations, OSCE institutions and civil society organizations engage in an open and constructive discussion. OSCE delegations and all participants are invited to raise questions and engage in an interactive and results oriented discussion and are discouraged from reading out prepared statements.

The Conference will also provide a platform for participants to share and learn more about the work of OSCE executive structures to implement the 2004 Gender Action Plan and will feature a market place where OSCE field operations, Institutions and Secretariat Departments can present their programmatic and project work in this area.